WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for automatically invoking a plurality of functional modules from within an application, comprising:

providing an interface for specifying a plurality of functional modules;

providing a configuration file containing information regarding invocation of the functional modules; and

invoking the plurality of functional modules in a manner determined according to information retrieved from the configuration file.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the interface is a graphic user interface utilized by users to specify functional modules.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the interface allows an external application to specify functional modules.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein:

the interface is utilized to specify a single multi-analysis functional module used to invoke the plurality of functional modules; and

the configuration file contains information relating the plurality of functional modules to the multi-analysis functional module.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the configuration file contains an explicit sequence in which the plurality of functional modules should be executed.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein:

the configuration file contains information indicating one or more parameters required for invoking each of the functional modules; and

invoking the plurality of functional modules comprises invoking only those functional modules whose one or more required parameters are available.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein invoking the plurality of functional modules in

a manner determined according to information retrieved from the configuration file comprises invoking at least two functional modules in parallel.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the configuration file is in an extensible markup language (XML) format.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the functional modules is a plug-in component of the application.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the functional modules is an external application.

11. A method for automatically invoking a plurality of specified functional modules from within an application comprising:

(a) obtaining a set of one or more parameters required for invoking the specified functional modules;

(b) invoking one or more of the specified functional modules whose required parameters are available in a result set collection;

(c) obtaining a result set in response to invoking the one or more functional modules;

(d) adding the result set to the result set collection; and

(e) repeating steps (a) - (d) until all the specified functional modules have been executed.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the result set collection comprises results received in response to issuing a query.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein an interface is used to specify a plurality of functional modules by specifying a multi-analysis functional module.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein obtaining the set of one or more parameters required for invoking the specified functional modules comprises retrieving

information from a configuration file relating the multi-analysis functional module to the specified functional modules.

15. A computer readable medium containing a program which, when executed, performs operations for automatically invoking and integrating a plurality of functional modules from within an application, comprising:

providing an interface for specifying the plurality of functional modules;

providing a configuration file containing information regarding invocation of the functional modules; and

invoking the plurality of functional modules in a manner determined according to information retrieved from the configuration file.

16. The computer readable medium of claim 15, wherein:

the interface is utilized to specify a single multi-analysis functional module used to invoke the plurality of functional modules; and

the configuration file contains information relating the plurality of functional modules to the multi-analysis functional module.

17. The computer readable medium of claim 15, wherein the configuration file contains an explicit sequence in which the plurality of functional modules should be executed.

18. The computer readable medium of claim 15, wherein:

the configuration file contains information indicating one or more parameters required for invoking each of the functional modules; and

invoking the plurality of functional modules comprises invoking only those functional modules whose one or more required parameters are available.

19. The computer readable medium of claim 15, wherein the configuration file is in an extensible markup language (XML) format.

20. A system for automatically invoking and integrating a plurality of functional

modules comprising:

a plurality of functional modules;

a configuration file containing information regarding execution of the functional modules; and

an application from which the functional modules are accessible, wherein the application is configured to provide an interface for specifying a set of functional modules and execute the functional modules in a manner determined according to information retrieved from the configuration file.

21. The system of claim 20 wherein the application is a query building application.

22. The system of claim 20, wherein at least one of the plurality of functional modules is a plug-in component of the application.

23. The system of claim 20, wherein at least one of the plurality of functional modules is an external application.

24. The system of claim 20, wherein:

the interface is utilized to specify a single multi-analysis functional module used to invoke the specified set of functional modules; and

the configuration file contains information relating the specified set of functional modules to the multi-analysis functional module.

25. The system of claim 20, wherein the configuration file contains an explicit sequence in which the specified set of functional modules should be executed.

26. The system of claim 20, wherein:

the configuration file contains information indicating one or more parameters required for invoking each of the specified set of functional modules; and

invoking the specified set of functional modules comprises invoking only those functional modules whose one or more required parameters are available.